arched trees of a forest, with any cry of pain or any burst of laughter subordinate to the sound of rustling leaves, to the sound of spring water entering a forest pool. To talk about it that way would leave the discretion, the tenderness, the wisdom of this book untroubled.

Someone might say he came from North Carolina, too, and that is how it really was on back roads in summer: "The road narrowed as it went till it was only wide enough for one thing going one way—a car or a truck or a mule and wagon—and it being July, whatever passed, even the smallest foot, ground more dirt to dust that rose several times every hour of the day and occasionally—invisibly—at night and lingered awhile and at sunset hung like fog and if there was no breeze, settled back on whatever there was to receive it . . ."

Or someone would say do you remember Rosacoke when she went alone to represent "the white friends" at the Negro servant girl's funeral: "'Miss Rosacoke, will you kindly view the body?' . . . They had laid Mildred in a pink nightgown that tied at the throat and had belonged to the lady she cooked for, but she had shrunk to nothing this last week as if her life was so much weight, and the gown was half empty . . ." Mildred was dead in childbirth with no father to give his name to her child, and it was with Mildred that Rosacoke had first watched the deer cross the dusty road leading his does into the woods to drink at the spring.

Mildred's name would be enough to tell all that is needed of the story which begins at that funeral. "It was 'Precious Name, Show Me Your Face' and it was Jesus they were singing to—meaning it, looking up at the roof to hornets' nests and spiders as if it might all roll away and show them what they asked to see." But Rosacoke looked out the church window at Wesley, wanting him to stop wiping the dust off his brand-new motorcycle, wanting him to come into the church so that she would not be alone, wanting him to stay with her always so that she would not be alone, wanting, hoping, with her desire endlessly refused, that "... he would change some day before it was too late and come home and calm down and learn how to talk to me and maybe even listen, and we would have a long life together—him and me—and be happy sometimes and get us children that would look like him and have his name and answer when we called."

But then it would be good to hear someone say that it's not just that she wanted him, not that at all; this story is not just about a girl wanting happiness. It is about a girl who sees beyond happiness, who will make the bold leap from the happiness of receiving to the joy of giving, who will accept the selflessness which alone creates the enduring self. It is fitting that she discovers this all-surpassing love during the Christmas pageant in the Delight Baptist Church, sitting there as the Virgin Mary. She holds the Child, Macey Cupton's ugly child, in her lap, and within her she bears the child that is "her secret and then her hate," while the shepherds and the kings advance in procession singing the simple words of another story.

Seventh Crisis

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SIX CRISES, by Richard M. Nixon. *Doubleday. $5.95.*

It was President Kennedy, the author reveals in his preface, who advised him that every public man should write a book "because it tends to elevate him in popular esteem to the respected status of an 'intellectual.'" Well, Bedell Smith once wrote about *Eisenhower's Six Great Decisions;* now we have Richard Nixon's *Six Crises.* Writing the book turned out to be the seventh major crisis of his life "and by far the most difficult from the standpoint of the mental discipline involved."

For a politician, it is a brisk, tightly constructed book, although the tone, which has the ring of authenticity, is embarrassingly egocentric. The six crises, all familiar to anyone who has followed Mr. Nixon's career, do not lose any of their dramatic impact in the retelling: the Hiss case, the Fund, the Eisenhower heart attack, the spitting episode in

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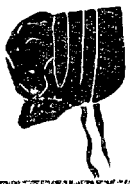

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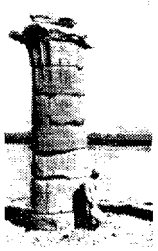

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Caracas, Khrushchev in the kitchen, and the 1960 campaign. They afford neat compartments into which Nixon the author manages to stuff the details of Nixon the politician's rise to world renown and then, by a fantastically narrow margin, his failure to win the Presidency. Using the crisis as a literary device permits Nixon to describe the way a leader thinks and acts during "challenge and tension . . . victory and defeat." One feels sometimes that this was meant to be a how-to book for succeeding generations of politicians.

But Mr. Nixon is not about to withdraw from practice to theory. On the final page he says, "For me, the evening of my life has not yet come," and, by way of proving it, he goes on at some length about his decision to become candidate for governor of California. As he makes quite clear, he has "drunk too deeply of the stuff which really makes life exciting and worth living to be satisfied with the froth."

Much of the book, of course, is recent history told as a highly partisan protagonist would like to have it recorded. Yet it is told with a great deal of restraint considering how differently some of the same episodes have been described elsewhere—and, indeed, by Mr. Nixon himself during the campaign. He is charitable to those who failed to see through Alger Hiss as quickly as did the freshman California congressman, only thirty-five years old at the time. Nor is Mr. Nixon excessively vindictive toward those who made an issue of his fund, which almost led to his removal as Vice-Presidential nominee in 1952. He duly records that in the opinion of some advisers his behavior in the Hiss case and the "Checkers" speech made him "controversial" and possibly contributed to his defeat in November, 1960. But he also notes philosophically that these two crises greatly contributed to make him a candidate for President.

In the recital of crises involving Eisenhower's illness as well as during the trips to Latin America and Russia, there is meticulous concern to record each emotion, each temptation to give way to anger, despair, or just plain fatigue. We are constantly shown the picture of the author refusing to yield to what he calls the

"crisis syndrome." And he never fails to record the approval of onlookers such as the Congressional Medal of Honor winner who after Caracas said that the Vice-President should really be wearing the ribbon.

In many ways, the book might serve as a legitimate campaign document for a still ambitious politician. But there is more to it than that. There is, for example, the not too thinly veiled account of the peculiar relationship that existed between Nixon and Eisenhower. Even now, Nixon seems puzzled by the rebuffs he received from the man who chose him as running mate. Only minutes before broadcast time in 1952, Dewey telephoned Nixon, obviously with Eisenhower's foreknowledge, to relay the consensus of the top command that Nixon should withdraw. In 1956 Eisenhower caused him "private agonizing" over whether he would be dumped as Vice-President. Even after the campaign began in 1960, the President answered facetiously a press-conference question about what major decisions Nixon had participated in. Eisenhower's retort, "If you give me a week, I might think of one," continued "to plague me the rest of the campaign." Though Nixon strives manfully to show equanimity in telling about these and numerous other crises involving fellow Republicans like Stassen, Rockefeller, and Sherman Adams, one gets the feeling that some bitterness remains. At one point he remarks of Alger Hiss: "[He] was learning what many people in politics had learned before him: those he thought were his best friends turned out to be the heaviest cross he had to bear."

Possibly for this very reason he shows no trace of bitterness toward Kennedy. Again Nixon meticulously explains all the difficulties of the 1960 campaign: how his heavy beard had projected badly on television, how Kennedy associates exploited the religious issue, how the White House, according to this version of the story, refused to instruct the Justice Department to look into Martin Luther King's arrest in Georgia ("Had the recommendation been adopted, the whole incident might have resulted in a plus rather than a minus as far as I was concerned").

Nixon claims that he got mad at his opponent only once. This was when he was told, mistakenly it has since turned out, that Kennedy had been briefed about the secret CIA mission to overthrow Castro before he publicly called for such a mission. Yet Nixon's response, even in the hindsight he provides, was a curiously disingenuous one. Claiming he had to protect the covert operation "at all costs," he condemned Kennedy's recommendation as "an open invitation for Mr. Khrushchev . . . to come into Latin America and to engage us in what would be a civil war and possibly even worse than that."

SELDOM has an American politician imposed so much self-analysis on the reading electorate. Possibly, as Nixon indicates over and over in the book, he has derived strength from all this introspection, through the detailed examination of the crisis syndrome and how it can be endured. But it may not be wise for a politician to make his inner life available for public inspection. As a people, we have traditionally preferred our leaders to be more discreet and restrained about revealing what they think of themselves.